

## **Growing Deeper in Worship**

**January 13, 2008**

(2<sup>nd</sup> in the series on ***Growing Deeper in Your Faith***)

Many times we become focused on things and on doing, rather than on being who God created us to be. We make everything in our lives complicated – forgetting not only who we are but whose we are. Today we focus on the necessity of worship and prayer for our souls. Worship is not just a song or sermon that moves us, but true worship is turning our lives wholly and completely unto God. Our focus in worship should not be on the instruments, songs, or style of worship or leaders. Our focus is the one who sits on the throne. True exultation of God comes from the broken and contrite heart which honors and glorifies God. Through true worship the roots of our soul reach deeper for the living waters of God's presence.

### ***Psalm 150***

Throughout the Bible we find directions for worship and praise. *Psalm 150* is a closing doxology both for the fifth book of the Psalms and for the Psalter as a whole. Temple musicians and dancers are called to lead all persons on earth and in heaven in praise to God. The psalm proclaims to whom praise shall be given; where praise shall be given; what praise shall be given; why praise shall be given; how praise shall be given, and by whom.

Throughout the Bible we find directions for worship and praise. Some would argue that this psalm is the clearest and most beautiful of them all. We need worship. Our soul is incomplete without God. Without the presence of God, the soul is impoverished and suffers. We experience the joy and peace that God intended for us.

#### ***"Praise the Lord!" (verse 1)***

*Psalm 150* opens with an exclamation that is typically translated, "Praise the Lord!" Literally the phrase means, "Hallelujah, Shout, You are the best to God the Lord!" The word "hallelu" is in every verse of this psalm. You could also translate it "tell someone they are great". But I like the direct "you are the best."

#### ***"Praise God in His sanctuary" (verse 1)***

Where do we find sanctuary? Do we find sanctuary in the church building only? Or do we also consider the serene confines of a lake or the majesty of the mountains sanctuary? Traditionally for the Hebrew (as well as the early church followers of Christ), sanctuary was the place where God and God's people came together. We believe the presence of God can be found anywhere, even in the darkest valley. Sanctuary is different. God's sanctuary is anywhere God's people are together to give praise to God. We are enriched as God uses the corporate gifts of the people to inspire all. We are blessed as God touches one for the edification of everyone.

#### ***"Praise God with trumpet sound, praise God with lute and harp!" (verse 3)***

The psalmist knows the importance of music. Music touches the soul in ways that words cannot. While words primarily touch the mind, music primarily touches the heart. The psalmist mentions many instruments in this psalm, no so much to require each to be used but to point out the importance of diversity in worship. For the psalmist, music is a symbol of our life of faith together. While the soloist or preacher may bring a special gift to our worship; in the song sung in perfect harmony we celebrate and experience our unity.

*Please note: The following daily readings allows you to study other passages that speak to the place of scripture in our lives. The Study Guide readings allow you to dig deeper.*

**Monday** – Read *1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18*. There are many Christians who will want to tell you about God's will. In Paul's letter to this church, Paul reminds us that God's will is to "give thanks, pray, and rejoice." Meditate on these three words today. Find three things for which to give thanks. Stop three times to pray. Discuss with someone the difference between rejoicing and happiness.

**Tuesday** – Read *Psalms 22*. This Psalm includes Jesus' words from the cross. At first it looks like a lament of sorrow and a cry for help. Though the song starts in anguish, it ends in triumph. In the darkest hour of Jesus' human experience he sings a psalm. Jesus reaches into our soul that we might feel his pain, but also knows God's promise of victory and triumph in all things.

**Wednesday** – Read *Philippians 4: 4-7*. Paul writes this letter of hope from prison. In spite of his condition he says rejoice. Does this mean that he is happy about being in prison? No. Paul says rejoice in a God who gives us strength in every circumstance. What walls are holding you back? Do you know someone who is held captive by circumstances? Can you help them rejoice?

**Thursday** – Read *Psalms 100*. Find some way to 1) make a joyful noise; 2) smile when you worship; 3) sing with a Christian song; 4) give thanks; and 5) share God goodness with someone.

**Friday** – Read Hymn 68, *When in our Music God is Glorified*. Sing or read this hymn as a prayer for the day. Find other favorite hymns. Try to remember the first time you heard the music of those songs in worship. How did you feel?

Have a great week!

See you next Sunday, January 20, for **Bearing Good Fruit in Service**